



## *City of North Canton, Ohio*

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**Update**

## **Media Release**

**Update**

### **For immediate release:**

**Date:** May 13, 2016

**Time:** 7:30 am

**Released by:** North Canton Police Department

**Re:** Black Bear sighting

**[North Canton, OH.]** The North Canton Police Department wants to alert the public that a black bear was seen by residents and police officers last night (23:00 – 01:30 hours) in the vicinity of Arrowhead Golf Course in the southwest side of town. ODNR was advised of the sighting. Since the bear has been non aggressive it has been recommended that no intervention with the bear is to occur. There have been no reports of any further sightings at this time. Residents and visitors are asked to be vigilant in regards to their outdoor activities especially with children and pets.

The North Canton Police Department has been in contact with the North Canton City Schools. It is highly recommended for children walking to and from school to be dropped off and picked up. Police patrols will be active throughout the City especially around schools and southwest and northwest side of town. Report any sightings to local law enforcement who in turn will contact ODNR.

###

**Date:** May 14, 2016 **Update**

**Time:** 7:30 am

**Released by:** North Canton Police Department

**Re:** Black Bear sighting

**[North Canton, OH.]** On Friday, May 13, 2016 the North Canton Police Department was notified late evening that a bear sighting had occurred about ten miles northeast of the City. It was presumed that was the bear seen in North Canton. However, at approximately 12:45 am on Saturday, May 14, 2016 residents in the 100 block of Far View Drive SW, saw a bear eating bird seed from their backyard bird feeder. Police officers responded to the call and confirmed the bear sighting. Two Wildlife Officers from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) responded to monitor the bear's movements. Several residents in the area were made aware of the situation. The ODNR Officers lost sight of the bear around 4:30 am. The bear is estimated to about two hundred pounds. It has not been aggressive. The plan is to force the bear, on its own behavior, east and out of the county to a more favorable habitat.

The North Canton Police Department is working with and under the guidance of the ODNR Wildlife Officers. Here is some safety information from ODNR's Division of Wildlife website.

Black bears are crepuscular, meaning they are active early in the morning and late in the evening. Daily timing of movements may be influenced by human activities. Bears in high human activity areas tend to be more nocturnal in their movements while dawn and dusk are the periods of primary movement among bears in low human activity areas.

Bears are omnivores; they will eat a variety of foods from fruits and grasses to meat. Grasses, forbs, berries, mast from oak, hickory, and beech trees, carrion, and insects are typical foods. Bears will also utilize agricultural crops, if available

### **Bear-Proofing Your Backyard**

Black bears are large animals and can cause significant damage while in search of an easy meal. If your yard is being visited by a black bear there are several things that must be done to ensure that the animal doesn't become a "problem bear". A "problem bear" can be defined as an animal that has lost its natural fear of humans and habitually causes property damage while in search of food. In this instance all potential food attractants must be removed from the area. This includes:

- Bird feeders and other wildlife feed-remove feeders, including hummingbird and suet feeders.
- Trash receptacles-store your garbage either in a garage or a secure container.
- Pet foods-keep pet foods inside, especially at night.
- Grease from grills-clean out grease traps after each use; store grill in garage or shed.
- Secure beehives-place electric fencing around beehives.
- Crops-pick fruit from berry bushes as soon as possible; scare bears out of agriculture fields as soon as damage occurs.

### **What to Do If You Encounter a Bear**

Black bears are usually fearful of people, therefore bear attacks are a rare occurrence. Bears do not attack or kill children or pets as long as the bear is given its space and not cornered. The first thing to do when you see a bear is REMAIN CALM. Generally, black bears are non-aggressive and prefer to flee from the area as soon as they are aware of your presence. If you encounter a bear, and it is not aware of your presence, simply back away from the area slowly. If the bear is aware of your presence and it does not leave the area, avoid direct eye contact with the animal, give the bear an easy escape route and again, simply back slowly away from the area. Always avoid running or climbing trees, which may provoke a chase. An easy way to remember this is to be AWARE:

- Act calm and do not run.
- Warn the bear that you are near; talk in a firm, calm voice.
- Allow space between you and the bear. Step aside and back slowly away. Do not make the bear feel trapped or threatened.
- Raise your hands above your head to appear larger if the bear approaches. Clap your hands or shout to scare the bear away.
- Exit the area.

### **Bear Relocation**

The Ohio Division of Wildlife does not relocate bears just because one is present in an area. Bears live in Ohio year round. They will continue to come back to a location if food sources are available to them. Hazing the bear off is the first step in dealing with nuisance bears. Black bears are only relocated if Division of

Wildlife (DOW) personnel determine 1) the animal is in a situation where escape is unlikely, 2) it is a threat to public safety, or 3) a sociological conflict is probable.

### **Report a Black Bear Observation**

To report observations of black bears contact your local county wildlife officer or regional District Wildlife Office. (Mark Basinger, Stark County 330-245-3041 or Wildlife District Three, 912 Portage Lakes Drive, Akron 44319 at (330) 644-2293 or North Canton Police Department at 330-499-5911.

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**Released to:** News Media **Released by:** Chief Stephan B. Wilder **Release date & time:** 5/14/16 – 7:30 am